

Message Text

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43

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMCONSUL MERIDA

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 811

UNCLAS MERIDA 0235

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CGEN

SUBJ: MISTREATMENT OF PROMINENT MEXICAN BY US CUSTOMS

1. MR. FERNANDO BARBACHANO OF MERIDA HAS WRITTEN TO THE CONSULATE BITTERLY COMPLAINING AGAINST US CUSTOMS SERVICE AT THE NEW ORLEANS AIRPORT FOR HAVING CONFISCATED 5,600.00 DOLS. IN TRAVELERS CHEQUES WHILE IN TRANSIT ABOARD EA FLT 906 FROM MEXICO CITY ON NOVEMBER 28, 1975. MR. BARBACHANO ALSO COMPLAINS OF RECEIVING EMBARRASING AND ROUGH TREATMENT FROM US CUSTOMS OFFICER BARRY W. COBBS.

2. MR. BARBACHANO IS THE LEADING BUSINESSMAN IN THE HOTEL AND TOURIST BUSINESSES IN YUCATAN AND MOST FAVORABLY AND WELL KNOWN IN MEXICO AND THE UNITED STATES.

3. MR. BARBACHANO STATES IN HIS LETTER OF COMPLAINT THAT OVER TWO YEARS AGO HE PURCHASED FROM THE FNCB OF NEW YORK ABOUT 12,000.00 DLLS IN TRAVELERS CHEQUES WHICH HE HAS CARRIED WITH HIM IN VARIOUS AMOUNTS ON HIS MANY TRIPS TO THE UNITED STATES.

4. ALTHOUGH THE CONSULATE IS AWARE OF THE REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE DECLARATIONS TO BE MADE BY TRAVELERS WHEN TAKING INTO THE U.S. AMOUNTS OF MONEY IN EXCESS OF 5,000.00 DLLS OVERSIGHT BY MR. BARBACHANO CERTAINLY
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IS NOT CRIMINAL AND THEREFORE YOUR ASSISTANCE IN HAVING

MR. BARBACHANO RECOVER HIS TRAVELERS CHEQUES WOULD BE APPRECIATED.

5. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT MR. BARBACHANO IS MOST ACTIVE IN PROMOTING TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES-PARTICULARLY FOR THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR. THE CUSTOMS SERVICE HAS BEEN SINGULARLY SUCCESSFUL IN ALIENATING MR. BARBACHANO AND I RECOMMEND IN THE STRONGEST TERMS POSSIBLE THAT NOT ONLY SHOULD HIS TRAVELERS CHECKS BE RETURNED, BUT THAT AN OFFICIAL APOLOGY BE FORTHCOMING. ASHFORD

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